

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 666.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1876.

PRICE 1½d.

AUTUMN.

SUMMER has departed, and the autumnal winds are blowing chill. The Spirit of the year, who rose, violet-crowned, from the pure snows of Winter's grave, to grow through Spring to Summer from a lovely child to a fair and gracious woman, has stood on the last boundary of Summer's land, and has once more gazed backward over the shade and sun-checked road she has traversed with such kindly intent, before leaving it behind her for ever. The noonday sunshine streams upon the deepening auburn of her hair, and reveals her beautiful as ever—with a beauty whose curves are more grandly modelled, and a tender smile that is grave with sadder meaning. The roses that bloomed so brightly in her path and all about her, have shed their sweet petals, and the winds have blown them and dried them; but as the spirit survives the body, so the scent of the flowers that owed their living beauty to the warm caress of her hands, still lingers near her, recalling the sweet memory of their lives. The soft warm breezes are loath to leave her, and woo her kisses still; the sun blazes as though there were no coming winter for him, and the air is warm; but on a sudden the winds rustle in the already thinning trees, bringing a wild flight of crackling leaves, whirling, as though in homage, to her feet. She shivers beneath the bleak touch of Autumn, and turns away with a sigh. But soon the sigh relaxes, and gives place to a loving smile, as she finds that though inevitably nearing the goal of decay and death, it is in her power still to gild whatever of that decay lies beneath, and to fling over it all a glorious mantle of beauty and plenty; and with that comfort in her heart she travels onward down the fair slopes of autumn, making them rich with a wealth of gorgeous beauty and luxuriant plenty that neither spring nor summer knew. She waves her wand, and straight the fields grow splendid with the ripening gold of oats and rye and wheat, which hang their richly laden heads, grown too heavy for the slender stems. The winds murmur gently through the rustling corn; the sun darts down his

fiery beams, brightening the wealth of moving yellow brown to a living, glowing sea of gold; and the Spirit laughs with a joy whose generous warmth falls over all the earth, deepening every tint, and making each odour of fruit and flower luscious with heavier fragrance, and filling every nook and corner with precious gifts to man; and as she laughs the sound murmurs rippling through the air:

'Tis the rush of the breeze through the dewy corn
And the garden's perfumed dyes.

The little delicate wild-flowers are dead, but the wastes and marshes and valleys are richly draped with ferns and orchids; the mountains are purple with heather; and in the woods spring thousands of fungi, graceful in a hundred forms, and glowing with scarlet and mauve and gold.

Gardens are redolent with the fragrance of bloomy peach and juicy apricot, greengages, red-cheeked nectarines, and purple plums; and the orchards are rich with shining apples and luscious pears. The corn has been reaped, and gathered, and thatched; and the country is filled with the hum of thrashing-machines and the echo of many voices. Harvest-home is still the great rural holiday in England, the completion and crown of the countryman's labours; and the harvest-moon shines bright and clear above the merriment of men and the gleaned and garnered treasures of the earth. The hedges and ditches and wooded dells are wreathed in ivy, and the crimson-berried arum, and green briony garlands; and feathered fringes of the clematis are intertwined with the red-streaked trumpets of the honeysuckle and the freckled caps of the tall foxglove. Clustering nuts hang their hazel heads, and the graceful acorn covers the sturdy oak. And over and above all the tiny spider throws an enchanted web of beauty in the transparent veil of silver tissue that he weaves over all the landscape, shifting and glancing in argent light over stubble-field and leafy copse, twining in beauty round the velvet head of the tall bulrush, and curtaining in the last swaying bluebells on the hill.

Autumn has not the exquisite freshness of spring or the flowery brightness of summer; but it is still rich in a beauty that is draped in robes of gorgeous colouring; for the woods are glorious with the magic of amber and crimson light; and when the early twilight falls, and the sun sets, the brilliance of their dyes seems to be new-born in upper air, as the skies burn and blaze at the dictate of the dying sun, who darts his slanting rays at the painted mantle of the woods, and sets them afire with a heavenly flame, till earth and sky and the reflected world beneath the waters meet in a universal glory; and when it dies, and the earth darkens, a veil of misty light rises from the face of river and lake and marsh, and infolds the gloaming in its dense white folds. But beautiful and weird as it is, the mist strikes damp and chill, and those who are wrapped in its clinging mantle are glad to exchange it for the warmer, brighter atmosphere of the cosy room, which sends its gleams of lamp and flickering fire-light in long broken lines out across the white mist, to lure them in. In the country, and more especially by the river, how beautiful with all its weirdness that filmy mist-veil—Earth's pale night-dress—is. How capriciously it seems to rise in isolated places; how fantastic are the shapes it assumes; how swiftly it gathers height and density; and how suddenly it again shrinks back into insignificance. One minute you are gliding peacefully with the stream, the splash of the oars being the only break in the twilight stillness (and when is Nature more still than in an autumnal evening); you gaze at the crimson glow in which earth and sky are bathed, and you wonder dreamily which is more real, the quiet darkening world above, or the tremulous shadowy world beneath the waters; you look with a vague curiosity at the quiet figure, so strangely like yourself, that gazes up at you from below, and try to imagine the life down there. These thoughts have passed like a flash through your brain, yet when you look up again you find the outline of the familiar scene changed as by magic. Far and near, white draperied forms seem rising and spreading, advancing, retreating—blotting out in their gliding progress a clump of willows, a cottage, a field—a very army of formless shapes, that draw ever closer together, clouding all before them; the banks recede, and the river widens into a sea—fantastic, floating fringes of white vapour rise from beneath, and wreath your boat, effacing that quiet figure below, as they stealthily creep up and over the rowlocks, and round your feet and knees, and up to your very throat, which they seem to grasp with icy fingers. You shiver at the chill, and suddenly realise that the world has disappeared and you with it, and that you (or is it your spirit?) are alone, suspended in the midst of a rolling ocean of vapour, through which you catch no glimpse of earth or sky, moon or stars.

Looked at in some lights, the time about October is the saddest time of the year, for in no other are decay and death so rife; and its great brief beauty only seems to render it more pathetic still; but as truth is many-sided, so is the autumn-time, and viewed in another light, surely it is the most boisterous and jolliest time in all the year. Never is the earth so overflowing with Nature's royal gifts; never is the human heart so full of joyous gratitude, for in autumn is the fulfilment of all the

promise and hope and faith of spring; never is the face of old, grape-crowned Bacchus so broad or so jolly, for in the sunny south the vineyards blush rosy red beneath the sun's burning kiss; in a thousand vats the must foams round the feet of men and girls, and the land runs red with sparkling wine—which is surely one of Nature's kindest gifts, though man in his brutal ignorance but too often abuses it, and turns the blessing into a bitter curse. Beneath England's shady skies the grape does not blush so brightly; but in green and graceful beauty our twining hop-gardens put to shame the foreign vines, whose natural grace is so often destroyed by being confined to the ugly forests of upright sticks, excepting in fair lazy Italy, where, like our own tendriled hops, they are allowed to twine from pole to pole, from tree to tree at their own sweet will, seeming a very troop of laughing Bacchantes dancing and swaying to the rhythm of the winds and breezes, hand clasped in hand.

Then when the sunshine pales, and winds blow bleak and thin the trees and hedges, autumn is still dear to the heart of the sportsman and the hunter, bringing manly and spirit-stirring sports which fill a large place in the life and interests of many, and helping to form some of the sterling qualities that go to the making of the English country-gentleman.

What can be more delightful and healthful than the brisk ride, to the accompaniment of 'A southerly wind and a cloudy sky,' through the fresh dewy lanes, that are bright with hips and haws, and deadly with purple nightshade, to the meet, where horses, hounds, and men are all pervaded with the general excitement; and when the hounds throw off, and the horses follow with winged feet across ploughed fields, up quiet country roads, over green commons that are prismatic in the morning sun with the airy draperies of innumerable dewy gossamer webs; through woodland paths that are beautiful with the glory of dying leaves, and over hills and downs whose shrubs shew crimson in the early light; through quiet farm-yards, and across hedges and ditches and sparkling streams—attended by the excitement of the huntsman's horn, tongue of hounds, shouting of men, and neighing of horses, as the scent is found, and Renard has 'gone away!'

Cruel though it seems to many, this pleasure, attained through the death of an innocent animal, is after all but an emblem of what Nature is constantly teaching. Pain and pleasure, ugliness and beauty, life and death, go ever hand in hand; and in autumn, at the same time that Nature's chief occupation is in dissemination or vegetable birth, its chiefest beauty arises from the vegetable death that is going on everywhere, and filling the earth with glory; so that we see the general mother Earth clothing herself in the lovely decay of her dead children, even while the full seed that shall be the hope and the life of another year sleeps warm within her bosom.

And as the trees turn to gold beneath the Midas touch of nature, and the leaves fall one by one to transfigure the Earth with the loveliness of death (as if to give her a peep beyond the grave), the fierce autumn gales that tell of coming winter begin to blow, and the 'sere and yellow' leaves are torn from the creaking boughs, and the forest world stripped of its pride, shews like a desert.

So, since the beginning of the world, Time has moved on through the ages; great Nature has kept on her way; spring, summer, autumn, and winter have followed on in unvarying succession, and filled the earth with ever-recurring beauty—Time, the Seasons, Nature, have travelled on in obedience to immutable laws, which in their changeless, resistless sequence pass over unheeded the individual pain and sorrow, sin and death, that fill the earth with a bitter cry. Wherever through the ages has existed life, there has been death; beauty, wherever ugliness; where pleasure, pain. Evil and suffering and death play as large a part in Nature's economy as good and life and beauty; they are dependent one on the other, and must go hand in hand; for until Time shall end, life must be evolved from death, as death from life, and the pain and evil of one must be the good and delight of another. The world is full to overflowing of beauty and truth, love and hate, good and evil, and all seems wrong and confusion and disorder. But above and through all, the mighty Spirit that rules the universe through immutable, unchangeable laws, evolves order from chaos, good from seeming evil, light from darkness. As Nature travels on blind and beautiful down the centuries, heedless of the cries and groans that rise from every nook of the earth to heaven, a spirit of infinite beauty and fitness and harmony is breathed through the discordant, contrary elements, though we may not see it here, and the universe pursues its foreruled inevitable way to the solemn immortal music of Love and Power and Justice, which are eternal and divine.

FALLEN FORTUNES.

CHAPTER XLVIII.—BREAKING IT.

JEFF remained at his post in Abdell Court for the remainder of that eventful day, though with a mind but little disposed for his business duties. As he had expected, however, and to his great relief, his employer did not return. The young fellow would have found it difficult indeed to maintain in his presence that indifferent air and manner which Dalton had enjoined upon him; and however successfully he had played an assumed part with the editor of the *Smellfungus Magazine*, it is doubtful whether he would have been equally fortunate with Richard Holt. When the office closed he betook himself at once to Brown Street, where he found Jenny, for the first time since her illness, sitting in the little up-stairs parlour—to which, even with her ordinary lodgers, Mrs Haywood hesitated to give the title of drawing-room, but modestly termed it her 'first-floor front.' There were flowers in the room, and in the window-sill there was a flower-box full of bud and blossom, that filled the air with fragrance.

'Is it not beautiful?' cried Jenny, drawing her visitor's attention at once to this unwanted ornament. 'Does not our room look a perfect bower?'

'A very proper cage for a sick bird to dwell in, till she is strong enough to fly at large in the sunny south,' answered Jeff gallantly.

'Now, none of that, Jeff. I am not Mr Sanders, remember; so please to stick to what I know is your proper element—prose. I can't think what has come to dear Kitty, that she should suddenly rush into these extravagances: it is not only flowers, but all sorts of delights and delicacies; and

not for my sake only; for she has actually bought Tony a trap, bat, and ball! One would have thought she had had a fortune left her—except for her face, poor darling.' Here her voice grew suddenly grave. 'I am afraid there is something—I mean, more than Tony and the baby and myself—upon her mind, Jeff. I can't make her out at all. She is sometimes quite extravagantly gay: a put-on manner, I am sure; and then again, she becomes more depressed than I have ever yet seen her; and that, alas! I can see is natural. Do you know anything, dear Jeff, about my Kitty, that I don't know?'

Jenny looked at him very earnestly as she said these words, but the young man's face only reflected her own quiet sorrow.

'Nothing, I think, Jenny, that you don't know,' he answered. 'She has avoided me—I may almost say shrunk from me—for this long time; ever since you have been ill, indeed.'

'And she has seen Mr Holt,' sighed Jenny. 'O why, O why have I been struck down like this,' added she passionately, 'and rendered a useless burden, while all things have been going wrong! Jeff, you'll lose her: mark my words, we shall all lose her, and she will fling herself away upon that man, for our poor sakes.'

'Don't, Jenny, don't! I beseech you not to give way. There is a God in heaven who will not permit it.'

'Ah, you think so,' returned Jenny bitterly. 'It is a happy faith.'

'It is a true one.'

'What! that horrible things are not permitted to happen every day? I see there is another mail from Rio: the *Sancho* has arrived. That makes the fifth; and still no news—no gleam of hope.'

'There is hope always, Jenny.' She looked up at him as quickly as the bird to which he had likened her, with swiftly scrutinising glance.

'He has come! Our father is alive!'

Then, but for his arm, she would have fallen: her cheeks were white, her eyes were closed; she lay upon his breast like a thing of stone.

'Great heaven! have I killed her with my stupid folly?' exclaimed Jeff in horror. 'How could I hope to keep such a secret from eyes like hers!—Jenny, Jenny, speak to me!'

'I hear you: I shall live to see him yet!' she murmured faintly. 'Lay me down—with my face to the wall, Jeff. Leave me alone with my Maker, whom I have denied. He will send the tears presently.'

'You will not speak of this, Jenny—just yet?' said he, once more alarmed at her long silence.

'To no human ear: no, Jeff. Leave me now, and go to Kitty.'

Jeff left the room, closing the door softly behind him. In the little passage he met Nurse Haywood.

'Well, Miss Jenny is getting on nicely, Master Geoffrey; is she not?'

'Yes, nurse. But she is tired, and wishes to get a little rest; so do not let her be disturbed. Where is Kitty?'

'Lor bless ye, why, where should she be except with the baby! She can scarce ever be got to let him out of her sight. It's my opinion, what with attending to that dear child, and housekeeping, and always being worried about this and that, as she is a-wearing herself out. I daren't tell Miss Jenny, but I have come across Miss Kitty at times when she looks fit to break her heart, though she has

always a smile and a kind word for a body when she speaks to one.'

'I hope she will speak to me, nurse. Please to say I wish to see her on very particular business, and that I will not detain her long.'

As he waited in the sitting-room down-stairs, revolving in his mind, how he should break his great news to Kitty, but failing to hit upon a plan, there re-entered to him Mrs Haywood.

'Miss Kitty is very sorry, sir, but she is much engaged; and if you would kindly write her a line, instead of seeing her'—

'I must see her,' interrupted Geoffrey impatiently. 'Did you not tell her my business was very particular?'

'Well, yes, Master Jeff, I did; and that was the very thing, to tell you the honest truth, as seemed to scare her. She has got enough and to spare on her poor mind already, you see.'

'Please go and tell her, nurse, that it is absolutely indispensable I should see her, but that what I have to say will not distress her. Be sure you tell her that.'

'Lor, Master Jeff, you ain't got any good news for her, have you?' answered the old lady in a trembling voice. 'Nothing about Mr John—him as I remember as young as you be, and as comely?'

'There is no time to lose about what I have to say,' answered Jeff, with as constrained a manner as nature permitted him to assume; 'and I do beg you will give my message.' His heart smote him at having to snub the good old dame, but he was also irritated at her sagacity, or rather at the transparency of his own attempts to conceal his errand. If his heart had been in literature, Mr Sanders would have read him as easily as a proof-sheet: it was only where his feelings were not concerned that Geoffrey Derwent could play the hypocrite. While still conning that unwonted part, Kitty entered the room.

'Well, Jeff, what is it?' cried she, holding out her hand. 'I never knew such a man of mystery. There is baby taking his first beef-tea, and yet Nurse Haywood says I must leave him to attend your Highness.' Her air and manner were too light and gay to be natural to the occasion in any case; but contrasted with her looks, which were wan and worn beyond anything he could have anticipated, they seemed unreal indeed. Her eyelids were heavy and swollen, and on her fair white brow sat unmistakable care and woe.

'I am not come upon my own affairs, dear Kitty,' said Jeff assuringly, 'or I would not have been so unfortunate.'

'The affairs of no one else can interest me—and all of us—half so much,' she answered smilingly.

'I meant to say I should not have intruded here, without a sufficient motive, Kitty—that is all. The fact is that—that—Mr Holt'—

At that name a shadow fell on Kitty's face and chased her smile away; she had been standing hitherto, but now at once sat down.

'That Mr Holt has had a summons to Liverpool with respect to the arrival of the *Sancho*.'

'Ah, yes; that is the Rio steamer,' she answered sadly. 'The fifth that has brought no news.'

'Well, it has brought news.'

'Of the *Flamborough Head*? What news?' inquired Kitty eagerly.

'The ship was wrecked; that's certain; but there were some survivors—two.'

'Two,' repeated Kitty mournfully; 'but two!'

'It is not yet known for certain—that is, publicly—who they are; but—now, don't cry, Kitty, darling Kitty—but there's a hope.'

'A hope? What! of papa's being alive, and he not here! I don't believe it. I want no more such hopes, Jeff; I can't bear them. They are killing me, I tell you; they are driving me to— I don't know what I am saying, Jeff, but I can't bear them.' Her head had fallen forward upon her open hands, and she was crying bitterly.

'Do you suppose I could come here to mock you, Kitty? I came to comfort you, to gladden you.'

'To gladden me?' She shook her head; her tone was as though he had suggested the most unlikely thing on earth; and yet she raised her face all wet with tears.

'He is alive, Kitty; your father is alive!' She looked like one awakened from a dream; astounded, dazed: the light of joy was breaking on the night of woe, but very slowly.

'Alive! Papa alive! Where is he?'

'In England. You will see him soon. I have seen him.'

'Thank God, thank God!' she murmured. 'Oh, thank God!'

Still she did not rise, nor shew any passionate excitement, such as he had expected, and had seen in Jenny. 'Is he well, Jeff?' she went on slowly.

'Yes, quite well. Philip Astor is with him, and has been very, very good to him. He is to be called Dalton now, and recognised as his brother.'

'When shall I see him? When is he coming? Why is he not here?'

'Because he feared the shock might be too much for you and Jenny. He is close by. Shall I fetch him in, or will you wait a little?'

'Wait a little—just a minute.' As she spoke, a joyful cry burst forth in the quiet street. Both glanced through the window, and on the other side of the way was Tony clasped in the arms of a thin grizzled man, in wayworn and outlandish garb. Behind them stood another. They were looking towards the house, and Jeff beckoned to them frantically, and ran to the front door. The next moment, Kitty, sobbing as though her heart would break, was strained passionately to her father's breast.

'Don't cry, don't cry,' he whispered, though the tears were falling down his own weather-beaten cheeks like rain; 'and you have not yet kissed dear Philip—your Uncle Philip.'

DRUMMERS AND FIFERS.

And the village 'wakes to the sound of the drum.

Old Song.

DRUMS and fifes are probably the most ancient, as they are certainly the most familiar, of all our musical paraphernalia; and they have been through many ages associated with scenes of warlike interest and display. Whatever be their origin, there is a charm connected with the fife and drum which is alien to all other instruments, and which makes the music they produce more applicable to military purposes than any other. It would be difficult, if not wholly impossible to describe the cause of this, but it is certain that on the line of march men find it easier to keep step to the lively tones of the fife and the brisk roll of the drum than to follow a brass band, which cannot be

distinctly heard further than about half the length of a battalion. It is a singular thing, however, that it is only the English-speaking peoples who make this kind of music national, for the French and other continental armies generally march to the sound of the drum alone, or to a combination of drum and bugle, when their brass bands are not playing. But this kind of music has never found favour with our British regiments, though many attempts have been made to introduce it. It has a foreign ring about it which makes it unpleasant to English ears, and it is of a very monotonous character, there being no more than five notes on the common bugle; consequently the few tunes that can be played upon it have a sameness about them which is exceedingly wearisome to the ear. But this does not prevent its being used occasionally, as a change to the music of the trombone or the fife.

The chief glory of the drum lies in the crispness of its sound and the beauty of its appointments, though of late years this useful instrument has been sadly used, by being cut down to a mere skeleton, composed principally of bolts and screws, with scarcely any body to it at all. The handsomest specimens of the drum which have been familiar to us from childhood and to preceding generations, are those borne by the drummers of the Guards, which are beautifully emblazoned with the royal coat of arms and the names of the battles in which each regiment has been engaged; and the bearers take a pride in keeping the plain brass brilliant, while the emblazoned portion is always well polished with beeswax.

'Drummer' is the lowest rank in the British army, for the private soldiers are included in the term *file*, and the former receives a penny per *diem* more pay than the latter. But though humble, it is a rank which ought not to be despised, seeing, as we shall presently shew, that it has been ennobled by brave deeds, and, like the highest rank in the army, honoured with the presence and patronage of royalty itself. The holders of the rank are generally the sons of soldiers, and have been educated in the regimental school, the attendance at which is still kept up, even after they join the service, until they attain the age of eighteen. Before they are permitted to enter the regiment, however, the consent of their parents is obtained, and the boys themselves must be thoroughly trustworthy and intelligent. As, however, the supply of boys, sons of men still serving, is limited, in consequence of the restrictions with respect to marriage in the army, many of them are obtained from those excellent institutions, the Duke of York, Caledonian, and Hibernian Schools, where they have already received a semi-military education, fitting them for the new career which they have chosen to adopt. The barrack-life of a drummer is not an enviable one, for the youth is exposed to many evil temptations, and is often made the slave or errand-boy of the common soldier. But these evils have of late years been considerably decreased by the wise act of separating the boys from the men and allowing them to have a mess of their own. The duties of the drummer are of a somewhat varied kind, and are not by any means limited to the pleasant task of playing at the head of a famous regiment. He has to mount guard in his turn whenever the guard is under the command of an officer, either carrying his

drum with him, or in the case of a fifer, his bugle; his duty when on guard being to go on official (and often non-official) errands, to sound or beat the salute and tattoo, and to accompany with a lantern the officer's 'rounds' at night. In barracks, the drummer performs orderly or picket duty, which consists in sounding or beating the 'calls' and warnings for the assembling of the troops for the different drills and parades.

When in camp the whole band of drummers and fifers assemble four times a day under the command of the drum-major, and play what is termed Réveillé, Troop, Retreat, and Tattoo or as some are inclined to call it, the Taptoo. The Réveillé (from the French verb *réveiller*, to awake) is generally played at five o'clock A.M. to rouse the camp from its slumbers; and a very pretty effect it has when one stands at a distance and listens to the various bands playing it as they march round their camp, each introducing into the regulation music some favourite national air. Troop is played at nine A.M. and is the commencement of an ordinary day's proceedings; Retreat at sunset, or 'gun-fire' as it is sometimes called, being the time when the evening gun is fired and the standard lowered; and Tattoo or Roll-call at ten o'clock P.M.* Twenty minutes is allowed for the duration of the roll-call, the commencement and finish of which are sounded on the bugle, and are called the first and last 'posts.' It is only the infantry regiments which possess a drum and fife band, the members of which number from twenty to thirty for each battalion.

The uniform of our drummers and fifers must be familiar enough to the eyes of every Englishman; yet very few people imagine that there is anything beyond mere ornament in the spotted lace which adorns their scarlet tunics. But there is nothing connected with the British army which is too insignificant to bear a history of its own, and consequently we find that the blue spot which is scattered so thickly on the drummer's tunic is the celebrated *fleur-de-lis*, or French lily, which being worn by the highest rank in the royal armies of France was, as a mark of our military superiority, bestowed upon the lowest rank in the British army. When in the field, the fife gives place to the bugle, and a bugler is attached to each company, the commanding officer also being accompanied by a bugler of his own. The remainder of the drummers are employed in the delicate and difficult duty of carrying the wounded to the hospital or ambulance, they having previously been taught how to bandage up wounds in the absence of the surgeon. Indeed many a brave fellow has ere now owed his life to the skilful and gentle hands of a little drum-boy, either from a timely bandage, or that 'cup of cold water' which, to a wounded man on the field of battle, is worth all the gems in a monarch's crown.

Instances have occurred in which the youthful soldier-Samaritan has been stricken by cruel death in the midst of his charitable work; and many of our readers may perchance have seen the exquisite little water-colour sketch by the Queen's eldest

*Hitherto, the time for roll-call or tattoo has varied, it having been nine o'clock in summer and half-past eight in winter when in camp, and nine in winter and ten in summer when in barracks; but a general order just issued fixes the time at ten P.M. all the year round—a boon which will be appreciated by the army at large.

daughter, depicting a scene of this kind which happened in the Crimea. The drummers of the British army have at all times acquitted themselves nobly in the field; and had we space at our command, we could give illustrations of individual acts of bravery that ought for ever to cast a halo around the name. It must suffice, however, to mention one or two incidents that have occurred within the memory of many who are still living. In one of the battles of the Peninsular war, a drummer, whose name and corps have both been unfortunately lost to history, having wandered from his regiment, was taken prisoner by the French and brought before Napoleon as a spy. Bonaparte frowned heavily upon his prisoner as he demanded of him his rank in the British army. On being told it was that of a drummer, the Emperor, to test the truth of the reply, caused a drum to be brought, and requested his prisoner to beat 'the charge!'

The drummer's eyes sparkled with enthusiasm as he gave the terrific roll and rataplan demanded.

'Now beat a retreat,' said Napoleon.

'I cannot,' replied the drummer proudly; 'no such a thing is known in the English army. We never retreat.'

'Good!' exclaimed the Emperor. 'You are a brave lad, and may rejoin your own army.'

Then turning to those near him, Napoleon gave directions that the drummer should be conducted back in safety to the English lines. Fortune is, however, a fickle jade, for at the battle of Waterloo this humble hero met with a sad death. He had been out with a body of skirmishers, who were suddenly attacked by cavalry and driven back on their supports. The latter formed square, and the earth shook beneath the feet of the advancing cuirassiers as they rode right up to the points of the bayonets. Beneath that rampart of steel lay the drummer, who had been too late to seek the shelter of the square. He was safe, however; and when the horsemen were driven back, he jumped merrily upon his legs and shouted: 'Hollo, comrades! here I am, safe enough!' These were the last words he ever uttered; for at that moment a round-shot carried his head off his shoulders and bespattered his comrades with his brains. Such is the fortune of war.

In the Crimea, on the evening of the day on which an unsuccessful attack had been made upon the Redan, a drummer was observed to leave the shelter of the trenches with his can of tea in his hand, and in the midst of a fearful shower of shot and shell from the Russian batteries, he threaded his way amongst the wounded, giving a drink here and a drink there until his can was emptied. Then flinging the empty can towards the enemy with a gesture of defiance, he walked coolly back to his post. By the means of this timely assistance some of the wounded were able to bear their sufferings until darkness enabled them to be rescued from death. The drummer-boy who did this brave deed received the Victoria Cross from Her Majesty's own hand.

One more incident we may mention of recent occurrence. During the Abyssinian expedition, a bugler whose name we have forgotten, though it is inscribed on England's roll of honour, was appointed field bugler; and as such, his duty was to accompany the general in command. When the army approached Magdala, this gallant lad left

Lord Napier's side unseen, and reaching the gates before the storming-party, he was the first to dash into the stronghold of the tyrant. For this daring service he of course obtained the cross For Valour.

When a boy enters the army at a very early age, which sometimes happens in the case of one who has suddenly become an orphan, he is generally made much of by the officers, and eventually ranks as the 'pet of the regiment.' An instance of this kind occurred in one of the regiments of the Guards shortly after the Crimean war. A bright, intelligent little fellow about nine years of age, whose father had been killed at the battle of Inkerman, and whose mother, having three younger children to attend to, had applied to have her eldest child taken into the regiment, was duly enlisted to 'serve Her Majesty the Queen, her heirs and successors.' The boy was so small in stature, and yet so clean and smart in his appearance, that he soon became the favourite of all, from the colonel downwards. His usual place on returning from a field-day was on the back of the colonel's horse at the head of the battalion; the colonel himself, an Alma hero with one arm, walking beside the animal, and ever and anon making some remark to amuse the little fellow.

It happened at this time that the young Prince Arthur had begun to evince a taste for military life, and, by the Queen's command, the drum-major of this battalion, which was stationed at Windsor, attended regularly at the castle to teach His Royal Highness the drum. Her Majesty and the Prince Consort were often present on these occasions; and one day when the young Prince asked his tutor if there were any drummers in the Guards as small as himself (the Prince), the drum-major informed his royal pupil of the facts relating to the little soldier-boy mentioned above. With her usual kindness of heart, the Queen directed that the little fellow should be brought to the castle on the following day. Accordingly, the morrow saw the worthy non-commissioned officer and his tiny subordinate—the latter being as prim as brushing and pipeclay could make him, with his fife under his arm and his forage-cap set jauntily on the side of his head—trudging up the castle-hill towards the royal residence. On reaching the royal nursery, they had not long to wait before Her Majesty and the young Prince made their appearance. The drum-major and his little charge instantly sprang to 'attention,' and brought their hands to the salute; while Prince Arthur, with a cry of delight, hastened forward and began to ask his brother-drummer a thousand and one questions. The 'pet of the regiment' was naturally shy in such august company; but he became reassured when the Queen, taking him kindly by the hand, addressed a few motherly remarks to him.

Then the royal drummer slung his drum, and calling upon the young Guardsman to 'play up,' the latter responded to the invitation with *God save the Queen*, the Prince joining in lustily the while upon his well-battered sheepskin. Her Majesty was greatly pleased with the simple compliment; and on the conclusion of the audience, she not only provided her novel guest with a good luncheon, but gave him a five-pound note for his mother. Prince Arthur continued his studies on the drum for several months afterwards; and when they were concluded, the drum-major received from the Queen's hands a handsome gold watch and

chain bearing an inscription, together with a portrait of the Prince dressed as a drummer, with his drum slung round his neck.

It may be well to mention here that the drum-majors of the Guards are also 'drummers in ordinary to the Queen,' their principal duty as such being to attend in their state clothing with the trumpeters of the Life-Guards (who hold a similar rank) whenever Garter King-at-Arms makes public a royal proclamation. This was done when peace was proclaimed in 1856, and the state trumpeters and drummers gave a flourish and a fanfare previous to the reading of the important document. The state clothing of the drum-major is very gorgeous, being embroidered all over with gold, and costs forty-two pounds each suit. It is renewed every seven years; and the old suit, which was formerly the perquisite of the wearer, is sold for the benefit of the public.

Independently of his bravery in the field, the humble drummer or fifer has at times developed extraordinary musical talent. As an instance we may mention a name which has long been popular in this country, especially in musical society, and is likewise well known and esteemed in our colonies in America—namely, that of Godfrey. About the year 1813, when this country was at war with Napoleon, a number of volunteers from the Surrey militia joined the Coldstream Guards, and amongst them was a fifer, who was likewise a good bassoon-player, and who, having joined the rank and file, attracted the attention of the officers by still applying his leisure hours to the study of music. This was Charles Godfrey; and on attaining the rank of sergeant in his new corps, he volunteered, amongst others, to go to the seat of war. But fortune ordained otherwise, for the bandmaster's post having become vacant, it was offered to young Godfrey, and accepted. He set himself hard to work in his new position until his became one of the finest military bands in the world—a reputation which it has ever since retained. The officers of the regiment were very proud of his success; and when in the course of time Mr Godfrey had completed his twenty-one years' service, they would not hear of parting with him, but retained him on handsome terms, until he eventually died in harness in 1863, after an honourable servitude of fifty years. His name and fame have been perpetuated in his talented sons, two of whom were bandmasters in the Guards before their father's death, and another succeeded him in the Coldstreams, so that each of the three regiments possessed a Godfrey.* These clever musicians have not only made their bands famous, but have added some celebrated *morceaux* to the musical repertoire of the nation.

And not only music but literature also has bowed before the conquering steps of the drummer, for in the year 1863 we find Her Majesty the Queen acknowledging the receipt of some verses from the pen of a drummer in the Coldstream Guards. When our readers next hear the sound of the drum mingled with the shrill tones of the fife, they will, we trust, remember the examples of famous drummers and fifers which these pages record, and which, if we had the space at our disposal, could be

* Charles Godfrey, junior, left the Scots Fusilier Guards some time since, and is now bandmaster of the Royal Horse Guards (Blue). Another son is a distinguished member of the Civil Service.

indefinitely multiplied. We might only mention that the colonel of one of the battalions of H.M. 17th Regiment has risen from the rank of drummer to his present post; and that Colonel M'Bean of the 93d Highlanders now commands the regiment in which he once served as a private soldier. England is served well and faithfully in every clime by all ranks and conditions of men, but by none more so than by those who, in the midst of perils, 'beat the Queen's morning drum round the world.'

FOLLOWING UP THE TRACK.

CHAPTER IX.

THE summer assizes for the county of Tipperary were to be opened at Clonmel on the 10th of July 1808; and how unlike in those days such an eventful episode in rural life, from the prosaic routine which now ordinarily prevails, when, instead of groups of barristers riding into the town, and the judges coming in with great state and parade, the levelling railway puts an end to all display and romance upon the occasion of the arrival of Her Majesty's actors on the tragic stage. But at the period with which our story is conversant, the assizes were the important epoch to which all local matters of interest were referable. The dance of death in the jail by day was to go on side by side with the cotillon or Sir Roger de Coverley gone through with vivacity and animation in the Assembly Rooms by night; and it was very exciting for those who had to lead quiet lives (save in the hunting-field) during the next six or seven months, to take up their position in the grand-jury gallery and look down from thence into the dock, when, for example, some man accused of murder was on his trial. To notice the tell-tale features of the accused; the pallid lips, and the mechanical grasping of the bars before him, and the intent eyes fixed upon the approver, at the table or in the witness-box as the case might be, as the latter, with the reckless assurance of one who thinks he is the chief actor and object of attraction on the occasion, and only telling an amusing story to a crowded audience, discloses with terrible particularity the confidential words which had been whispered to him by the prisoner while they were watching in the grove, or behind the ditch, for the arrival of their unsuspecting victim.

The second day of the assizes arrived, and it was apparent that a trial of more than ordinary importance and moment was about to take place. The country-people, for it was market-day, congregated about the doors which led to the galleries that are set apart for the general public; and the officials, down to the crier, seemed oppressed with the sense of their own consequence. The hum of voices suddenly ceased; the words 'The judge is coming' were repeated from one to another; and soon, in dignified form, the Lord Chief-justice, invested in his scarlet robes and ermined cape, presented himself; and with a quiet courteous

and gracious manner, he proceeded to take his seat upon the bench, where already were spread out before him a number of venerable-looking and portly volumes, supposed to contain precedents for everything.

'Put forward Brien Spelassy,' said the clerk of the crown in his most serious manner, addressing the jailer; and after a few minutes of suspense, heavy footsteps were heard from below the dock ascending the stairs of a dark passage, and then the man named stood in front of it; every gaze was directed, with what might be designated as the indecorum of curiosity, in the one direction. There he was at bay—an animal to be hunted down like an object of the chase; to be made the subject of speculation and inquiry as to his acts, and the inferences to be deduced from them; his life to be flung about from the battledore of one legal player to another; condemned to have his lips sealed as a witness for himself, and at the time in question, not even permitted to have counsel to speak for him. The prisoner cowered before the many faces that for him bore no traces of sympathy; and he bent down his head until it rested on the cold iron rail before him; but when the formal question was asked, after the indictment was read out, whether he pleaded guilty or not to the charge of the wilful murder of Ellen Power, with something of a defiant air, and drawing himself up to his full height, he firmly answered: 'I am not guilty; I am as innocent of her death as the child unborn. I had neither hand, act, nor part in it.'

It has been said, but certainly in somewhat of an exaggerated tone, that the great aim and end of the constitution is to assemble twelve men in a jury-box—men who are to be exclusively the judges of facts, and upon whose fiat depend the lives, the liberties, and the fortunes of their fellow-citizens. There is also the axiom that every person when accused has a right to be tried by his peers; not, indeed, the felon by a brother-felon, or the thief by a thief, but the humble man by one of an equal position in the social scale. But though the theory be a fine one, it is seldom it can really be carried out in practice. The wealthy grazier whose herds and flocks dot his pastures, and bring in a large revenue for himself and his children, can scarcely regard without an insensible bias in his mind the individual who stands before him charged with cattle or sheep stealing. The prosperous landlord will not have much favour for the tenant who is arraigned for shooting a brother-landlord or his agent, because his rent has been raised; and the honest merchant or the county gentleman would crimson with indignation were he to be told that he was the peer, or equal, of the shoeless, shirtless vagabond indicted for mistaking the goods of another for his own, and under the temporary hallucination converting them to his own use. However, on this eventful second day of the assizes, twelve gentlemen were sworn on the jury which was to determine between King George and Brien Spelassy the issue of life or death, and within the little area of a pent-up box to exercise one of the attributes of

supreme power. They could not, indeed, confer life, but their verdict was one which could take it away, and their grave and anxious countenances shewed that they were fully sensible of the responsibility cast upon them.

The leading counsel for the prosecution, Mr Charles Travers, was one of those clear-headed and cool personages not to be diverted from his purpose or thrown off his guard by any surprise, however unexpected. He was one who, if a volcano burst under his feet, would affect to regard it as a playful freak of nature, and scarcely condescend to brush the ashes or the lava off his boots. Opening his brief, after untying the red tape with almost provoking slowness, he proceeded to state the facts proposed to be given by him in evidence; and in his quiet colloquial manner of speaking, without any apparent exaggeration, there was far more of persuasiveness than if he had resorted to vehement appeals to the prejudices of his audience; and the impression he conveyed was that of a minister of justice who had a very painful duty to discharge in attaching guilt to any human being, but who had a paramount duty imposed upon him in the interests of society at large. The case, he observed, was one of which they had all doubtless heard; and the prisoner at the bar was charged as being a participator in the murder of Ellen Power; and on the same occasion her infant child was killed; but with that latter crime the jury had now nothing to do.

As Mr Travers stated the facts with cautious moderation, deprecating any conviction unless guilt should be clearly established, Maurice Power, who had been permitted to place himself in an angle of the court, between the seats reserved for the lawyers and the dock, and who could see and hear everything that was passing, without at the same time occupying any prominent position, could scarcely refrain from interrupting the speaker as he heard such deprecating words. 'Why,' he reasoned, 'should the counsel for the crown admit anything that might influence the jury in favour of a criminal; and the muttered words: 'Can the pass be sold on me? It is money must have done this,' was fortunately so indistinct that no one collected the import of the words, which were only so far audible as to draw down from the crier the warning: 'Silence in the court!'

The crown counsel proceeded to dilate upon the natural horror which the crime of murder excited among all nations from the earliest period of even sacred history; and that the most polished community of antiquity so execrated the taking away of life, that the judges deliberated under the canopy of heaven and in the silence of night, as they considered the very walls of any edifice would be polluted by the presence within them of an assassin. There might have been also another reason for the adoption of such a mode of trial—namely, lest the appeal made to their feelings by the supplicatory looks of the culprit should sway their judgment. Passing from such general topics, Mr Travers said he would detail in few words the facts which were considered to establish the guilt of the accused. The murderers were three in number at least; but the utmost vigilance of those acting for the prosecution had obtained no clue by which to discover the third member of the party. The object of these ruffians was plunder; for the poor girl who became their victim was one

against whom no motive could be suggested for entertaining hostility; but possibly from being alarmed by some sudden noise while searching the cottage, or owing to her resistance, and a suspicion that she might have recognised one of their body, the robbery was accompanied by a deed which no words could too forcibly denounce. The husband of Ellen on the morning of the night in question had left their home to obtain at Clonmel a loan of money to augment a sum which it was known he kept in the cottage; and the prosecution would produce before the jury the afflicted and bereaved widower, who could shew where he had been during that momentous day and evening; and detail what he saw on his return to the Glen, which was a very secluded spot through which few passed, as it led to no village or hamlet, and to no frequented pathway. On one point the evidence of this witness would be no doubt confused, and that was as to what happened to him while he was in the public-house or tavern of a Mr Meagher, who was a wealthy individual, a money-lender, and if report spoke true, a hard but respectable man; and it was but fair to the prisoner to throw out the suggestion that possibly Power had taken somewhat more drink than was advisable, in that or some other place in the town, and the influence of which might not have entirely passed away when he left Meagher's house for the Glen. But there was no question that a sudden great shock, or an appalling incident, could at once restore the mind to all its original powers of observation and thought; and when the husband proceeded up the boroen or lane leading to the farmyard, and when he heard the steps of the murderers at that unwonted hour of night, he became himself again in all the integrity of an unclouded reason. What then occurred? The accents of one person left an indelible impression upon his ear; and although the words spoken on that occasion were few, they were most significant; and the witness would swear beyond any question or doubt that the voice he then heard was that of Brien Spelassy, the prisoner at the bar; and that he had at once recognised it, after months had passed away, at a place and at a time when there was nothing to suggest inquiry or awaken any suspicion against the accused.

The advocate for Spelassy was Mr Supple, considered to be a very rising junior of twenty years' standing at the bar, quick, sharp, loud-spoken (a great merit in the estimation of the country people), and with a more than due estimate of his own abilities, although not a very profound lawyer; and when he heard what was meant to be relied on as so important a proof in the chain of evidence, he smiled with a contemptuous air, and proceeded with elaborate care to wind his watch and set the minute-hand forward.

This little piece of forensic acting did not escape the observation of his adversary; but he considered it more prudent not to notice it, and therefore went on to observe that even if he were in a position to prove no more in the case, there was quite enough to entitle the crown to ask for a verdict of guilty, unless the man at the bar could prove by trustworthy persons that he was at a distance on the night in question. But it would be further established by the testimony of a young girl of unimpeachable character and great intelligence, that her cousin John Dwyer had formed an

acquaintance with the prisoner; and two evenings before All-Hallow's night the latter had come from Clonmel to Mulla, a considerable distance, apparently on no business; and after much persuasion, Dwyer was induced to leave the village in his company; and was from that time never heard of until his dead body was found under circumstances which would have a very material bearing indeed upon the other facts to be brought forward. 'It might be said,' continued Mr Travers, 'by my learned friend who sits beside me, that the meeting of the two men and their leaving together, although suspicious, went but little way in attaching guilt to the accused. So able a counsel!'

Here Mr Supple, the gentleman in question, nodded assentingly, as if the epithet was his exclusive property, and he felt gratified that it had been restored to him in so public a manner.

'So able a counsel,' repeated the speaker, 'might put forward his views to the extent of urging that it was quite consistent with the truth that the two men soon separated after they left the village of Mulla; but there were persons on the road who recollected seeing them together very near Clonmel, and that Dwyer was afterwards at the place of the outrage, would admit of no controversy. It was at the Glen farm cottage he met his death. While assisting the prisoner and his unknown confederate to plunder and slay, an avenging hand was there raised against him; and the man who grasped the weapon by which he met his death was none other than the bereaved husband of Ellen Power!'

A wail of agony, appalling in its distinctness, as these words were spoken, rang through the court, and for the moment scared every auditor, and then the heavy fall upon the ground of a girl who had been standing on some steps near the dock added to the natural excitement. The crowd, however, gathered round her, and with gentle hands lifting her up, carried Mary Dwyer, bleeding from a wound in the temple, into the open air.

'I was observing, gentlemen of the jury,' resumed Mr Travers, 'when interrupted by what has just passed before your eyes, upon the remarkable fact that the prisoner will be demonstrated to have left Mulla with this Dwyer two evenings before the fearful outrage which we are now investigating; that he was seen in his company a few hours before its occurrence; that Dwyer was killed in the bedroom of the cottage just after Ellen Power was basely assassinated; and it was then, in order to prevent their guilt being traced by the body, which would have been left in the hands of justice, that, no doubt with great labour and difficulty, his associates conveyed it to the cave, in which, through the agency of Providence, it was finally discovered. What further was there in the case? A search-warrant was granted to examine a room in Mr Stephen Meagher's house which it had been previously ascertained was in the exclusive possession of Brien Spelassy, and the door of which he always kept jealously locked, if he only left the house for a few minutes. When the constables came to institute their search, Spelassy, in the first instance, represented to them that he had lost the key; but it was found under the chair in which he had seated himself; and along with it another of a smaller size, which opened an old-fashioned drawer, fitted into a deep recess beside the window. In that drawer a large sum of money was

discovered, far beyond what reasonably might have been expected to be in the possession of a person in his position in life; but in addition, a number of forged bank-notes, which might account for his frequent visits to fairs when having no ostensible business in such places, and his readiness to oblige illiterate farmers, as he did at the fair of Mulla, by counting up the money and notes received by them for their cattle and other stock.'

The legal indignation of the prisoner's counsel could not be restrained as this latter statement was made, and addressing the judge, he said: 'My lord, I am most reluctant to interrupt my learned friend, but he should not make a reference to what he designates as the discovery of supposed forged notes. There is no such charge in the indictment, and, of course, could not be, and the statement in question is not only irrelevant but illegal.'

A long discussion arose in reference to this objection, which certainly did not interest the general audience. On this occasion the discussion ended by the dignified personage appealed to satisfying neither side, 'hoping that Mr Travers would carefully avoid mentioning anything which might afterwards be excluded when tendered in evidence, but at the same time deciding that the finding of the notes, if shewn to be forged ones, was a portion of the whole transaction, and therefore could not be excluded.'

'I think I shall not be interrupted again, unless there be some real necessity for it,' remarked the advocate for the crown, for an instant forgetting his usual calmness; 'and I now proceed to mention a circumstance which, in my humble opinion (but that, gentlemen, is subject to your better judgment) is, when taken in connection with the other proofs, conclusive of the guilt of the man in the dock.'

As he thus spoke, the cheek and the lips of Spelassy blanched; his eyes were rapidly directed to each portion of the court to see what effect this announcement created; a sickly smile of assumed incredulity and indifference played across his mouth, giving way, however, almost instantly to a rigid expression. He muttered something to the turnkey who was standing beside him, and then looked to his counsel, as if there to ascertain whether he had anything more than ordinary to fear; but Mr Supple seemed to be wholly engrossed in the perusal of a letter, acting his part at this juncture, for could a person have then glanced over his shoulder, he would have discovered that the letter was reversed in his hands, literally turned upside down.

'I need scarcely remind jurors of your experience,' proceeded Mr Travers, 'that it is the usage—a usage derived from the remotest periods of antiquity—when country-people pledge their troth to each other, to break a gold or silver coin, each part of which is preserved with the most superstitious care; and now I produce for your inspection one half of a coin which the fond husband of the poor victim whose death we are inquiring into, always kept on his person from the hour when Ellen Morrissey pledged herself to become his wife.'

Here the sensation rose to fever-pitch, and many were the eyes now strained forward in the endeavour to catch a glimpse of the coin, while, with tantalising delay, the numerous folds in which it was wrapped up were removed and carefully

laid aside on the table. The love-token was handed to the judge, and then to the jurors, and examined with almost feminine interest and curiosity. It was a portion of one of those massive Spanish dollars which foreign traders to the port of Waterford were formerly in the habit of exchanging for the butter and eggs of the country-people who came to the market on each Saturday; and the coin having been unequally broken, some jagged edges were apparent where the severance had taken place.

'And now,' resumed the speaker, in his most impressive accents, 'the significance of that record of the affection of these humble people will be at once understood when I mention that on the night when Ellen Power met her untimely death she had the corresponding portion of the dollar secured round her neck in a leathern purse, together with a number of guineas which her husband had given into her charge when leaving the Glen for this town; and that identical purse, but emptied of its contents, was afterwards found on the body of John Dwyer; and here is the part of the broken token which the wife had with her on that fearful night. Where was it found? you will at once ask. It was found locked up in the drawer belonging to the prisoner, and to which depository he alone could have had access. What link in the evidence is now wanting, I may confidently ask? The irresistible inference to be drawn from this discovery, no casuistry, no legal skill, or eloquence can meet or answer.'

That the two pieces of the dollar fitted together, and had originally been part of the same coin, could not, indeed, be questioned when examined by even the most casual observer—the undulating projections of one sank into the opposite cavity, and a flaw in the casting passed like a fine thread from rim to rim.

There is inherent in our natures a love for mysteries and surprises, and too frequently it is found that an undue importance becomes attached to circumstances which have the appearance of romance in them, and lift us out of the ordinary incidents of life; and an uneasy, disquieted look was visible on the countenances of the twelve men in the jury-box, as if they were becoming impressed with the conviction that escape from the discharge of a painful duty was not possible; but the astute advocate of Spelassy turned with a smiling aspect to his forensic adversary, and said: 'Were it not that admissions cannot be made in a criminal case, I would be ready at once to dispense with your proving that the love-token was the one so exchanged and religiously preserved by both husband and wife. Indeed the fact is obvious.'

'What on earth can be his defence?' was the thought which flashed across the mind of Mr Travers; but stimulated by the zeal and desire for success which even prosecuting counsel may feel, although the stake played for be the condemned cell or the free air, he proceeded with masterly skill to link together every slight incident in addition to those which were of such serious and startling import; and when he had closed his address, contrasting what had been the happy home of Maurice Power and what was to be his desert future of existence—an outcast, alone in the world—a subdued thrill of emotion ran through those who were listening to his words; and all seemed to be assured that in a few brief hours the

hardened being in the dock would know more of the great and awful secrets of a future world than all the gifted living poets and philosophers with their lofty intellects and noble aspirations.

(To be concluded next month.)

OURSELVES AS OTHERS SEE US.

I AM inclined to think that every man is the best judge of his own character, and that every nation knows its own strong and weak points. And yet we should perhaps get on badly without the candid friend to tell us now and then an unpleasant truth, and the indulgent friend to give us words (also wholesome if judiciously administered) of encouragement and appreciation. Towards the nation, the intelligent foreigner fills these rôles. On the whole, I think England has no cause to complain of the remarks made upon her. There may be a few who, like the learned Smellfungus, 'travel from Dan to Beersheba,' and say 'It is all barren;' but from Froissart to Erasmus, from Erasmus to Bunsen, there have been many who have looked at England with kindness as well as interest, and who have been quick to acknowledge her merits with no grudging praise.

The earlier travellers throw a valuable light upon manners and customs likely to be passed over in silence by native authors to whom they are perfectly familiar. Many, both early and recent, reflect a light upon their own country; thus, from reading the *Shah's Diary* we may form a good idea of the present condition of Persia. To give a few more instances of this. When the Baron de Pollnitz, who visited England in 1733, remarks with satisfaction that torture is not employed, not even in cases of conspiracy, it reminds us of the barbarities so long practised in other countries. In France, *la question préparatoire* was not abolished till forty-seven years later, and torture was not completely dispensed with till the Revolution. In Russia it was legal till 1801. When Nathaniel Hawthorne remarks in nearly every page of his *English Note-book* upon the green mantle of ivy which here makes beautiful the most unsightly objects, we remember that tumble-down walls and blasted trunks have in North America no such decent covering under which to hide themselves.

It is pleasant to find that our visitors of all nations speak continually of the kind and hospitable treatment they receive. In this respect we have improved since the days of Froissart, when, as he tells us, 'the English were so proud and haughty that they could not behave to the people of other nations with civility.' But a certain coldness of manner is complained of. There are Englishmen, or at least there were in 1733, who seem on particular days not to recognise those with whom they have been living the evening before. The observer was at first inclined to attribute this to English pride, but at last good-naturedly concludes that it is 'the effect of a melancholy humour, which is spread over nearly the whole nation.' Are we really so very melancholy? It is consolatory to hear that Simond, a Frenchman who, in 1810,

visited England after a twenty-two years' residence in the United States, finds us much more cheerful than he expected. He is surprised at the way in which a joke is welcomed in the House of Commons, and finds an animation there that he was not prepared for. Not, indeed, that it is quite as lively as the American Congress, where in his day two members engaged in a regular combat with fists—nay, even with the poker and tongs—and the Speaker left the chair to give fair play. But to Frenchmen, our very mirth appears serious. What amuses us does not amuse them. M. Taine makes a frantic attempt to understand and explain English humour, but few will think that he has succeeded. 'Generally,' he says, 'it is the pleasantry of a man who, though joking, maintains his gravity.' He 'who jests here is seldom kindly, and is never happy; he feels and forcibly censures the inequalities of life.' That there is much of this humour among us, a humour that helps us to put into a palatable form that continual abuse of ourselves, which is another great wonder and puzzle to foreigners, I do not deny; but surely we are not without some of a more genial kind, some that does not 'leave an after-taste of vinegar.'

But this and a few other mistakes and much flippancy we may forgive M. Taine in gratitude for what he has done to make English literature known and appreciated in France. Voltaire was the first Frenchman to discover some merits in Shakspeare, indeed he did him the honour to borrow his *Zaire* from *Othello*, but before his death regretted that he had led the way, when he saw Ducis following with versions of *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and other plays. Acquaintance with our literature did not, however, spread rapidly. Simond, in 1810, says: 'The French have heard no doubt of some of the English writers—they know that Newton was a great mathematician; that Pope wrote an *Essay on Man*; they admire Young, whom nobody reads in England, and being *d'un beau noir*, they think it quite English; Shakspeare they understand has written a number of barbarous tragedies, and Milton a mad poem on *Paradise Lost*: add to these two historians, Robertson and Hume, and you will have the main body of English literature, lost in a crowd of English novels fabricated at Paris.' And Simond himself, whose long stay in America had made him perfectly familiar with our language, and who actually preferred the literature of England to that of France, speaks of Shakspeare in a way that would make a modern critic's hair stand on end. Hamlet is in his opinion 'one of the most ill-conceived and inexplicable of his plays;' but he suggests that things might have been better had the English bard had the good fortune to be born 'a century later, before taste was over-refined, and when it had ceased to be barbarous.' A well-educated Frenchman would now, I think, speak more respectfully, and Victor Hugo no doubt intended a high compliment when he called Shakspeare 'his intellectual twin-brother.'

Let us now come to something that touches us more nearly—what foreigners have thought of Englishwomen. To begin with: they have, it seems, a great talent for silence. 'The other day I was visiting,' says the Baron de Pollnitz, 'at a house where there were twenty women and not one man. They looked at each other and said not a word. Find me elsewhere if you can,' he exclaims, 'twenty

women thus staying quiet.' Simond says: 'Women do not speak much in numerous and mixed company;' and M. Taine is told of a lady of the highest class, accustomed to important ceremonies, 'and who becomes dumb and blushes when a stranger is introduced to her.' When women meddle in politics they are (or were in 1810) still more violent and extravagant than the men. Their want of taste in dress is a sore trial to foreigners, and M. Taine seems a little doubtful whether the very robust health that they enjoy is consistent with perfect refinement. In him, however, literary ladies have found a champion, though it is evidently rather a surprise to him to discover that authoresses may be pleasing and natural. I do not think he was quite correctly informed by the friend who told him that no 'well-brought up woman reads journals of the fashions.' While European writers wonder at the liberty which young ladies are allowed, Americans make the very opposite remark. In this matter English custom has adopted a medium course; may we say the happy medium? Hawthorne delivers his verdict upon Englishwomen in this oracular sentence: 'It is certain that a woman in England is either decidedly a lady or decidedly not a lady.' He sees a set of school-girls of the lower class, and talks of their 'stubbled sturdy figures, round coarse faces and snub noses;' they are quite wanting 'in the slender elegance of American youngwomanhood.' Possibly, however, they had something to compensate them, for we are told they looked 'wholesome,' which is, if I mistake not, American for 'healthy.'

It is strange that our nearest relations, who so much resemble us—the Americans, are by no means our most favourable critics. Mr Hawthorne is much less pleased with Englishmen than M. Taine. According to the former, 'an Englishman of genius usually lacks the national characteristics, and is great abnormally.' 'Success makes an Englishman intolerable;' 'in adversity,' Mr Hawthorne concedes, 'he is a very respectable character; he does not lose his dignity, but merely comes to a proper conception of himself.' Further on we are told that 'the English are a most intolerant people and that there seems to be very little difference between their educated and their ignorant classes in this respect.' Even our personal appearance comes in for a share of Mr Hawthorne's criticism; he talks of a 'three-cornered English nose.' There is one thing, however, and perhaps one only, of which he takes a more favourable view than M. Taine, and that is our weather. While the Frenchman complains that 'the intercourse is perpetual between the moist sky and the moist earth,' the American thinks that English fine weather is the best weather in the world, or at least that there are only a few days in an American October that can be compared with it.

There is one subject on which all our visitors seem to be agreed—the beauty of English scenery. Let those who are too ready to pass over the quiet loveliness at home, and think there is nothing nearer than Switzerland worthy of their raptures, lay some of these observations to heart. Pollnitz 'cannot understand how people born in England, and possessed of a certain amount of fortune, can make up their minds to leave it for countries less favoured by nature;' and he mentions as one of its greatest charms that you 'see there no miserable peasants; all are well housed, well

clothed, well fed.' One might almost imagine that Mrs Hemans's poem on the *Homes of England* was composed by some enthusiastic foreigner. Our gardens, or more properly pleasure-grounds, 'shew the poetic dream of an English soul.' 'The beauty of English scenery makes me desperate,' exclaims another observer; 'it is so impossible to describe it, or in any way to record its impressions, and such a pity to leave it undescribed.' What might he have said of some of the scenery in the Highlands of Scotland!

M. Taine ends his account of England with the consideration of this question: Which of the two forms of civilisation is the more valuable, that of England or that of France? And he answers that each has the superiority in three things. The three things better in England are: the political constitution, religion, and the greatness of acquired wealth, combined with the increased power of producing and amassing—no trifles certainly. The three things better in France are: the climate, the distribution of wealth, and domestic and social life. The truth of this last assumption of superiority we may not all be willing to concede, and the English side of the question might be well argued from data supplied by M. Taine himself. But this would lead us to a discussion too long and too deep; and it is time for me to conclude this feeble attempt to represent England as she appears reflected in the mirror of foreign opinion. I have not even mentioned the names of many authors who might have assisted me. Madame de Staël; the American minister Rush; Barillon, so often quoted by Macaulay; those Venetian ambassadors who sent to their republic such minute and curious reports from Henry VIII's court—all these and many more would furnish to any one seriously attempting the subject much information both valuable and interesting. I have but skimmed over the surface of a theme that is susceptible of widely different treatment.

NIGHT-FISHING OFF THE STAGS.

CADGWITH is a pretty cove on the south coast of Cornwall, a mere fishing hamlet, but of great importance in its own estimation. It has two separate 'pilchard concerns.' In the crabbing season it sends out twelve or fifteen boats in search of this voracious shell-fish, and it is a coast-guard and lifeboat station. Some few enterprising tourists come here in the summer to enjoy the balmy air and the lovely cliff scenery—those cliffs, with their deep shadows and splendid colouring, towering up some two hundred feet from the dark-blue sea. It is difficult to correctly describe the tints on these rocks. The serpentine which composes them, and is peculiar to this coast, takes deeper and richer hues than even the red sandstone of South Devon, while above the 'spray-line' the dark corners of the stone are bright with patches of golden lichen. After all, perhaps, the Cadwith people are right to be proud of their village, for approaching it from inland on a bright summer morning, it is hard to imagine a more lovely spot. Two hilly paths drop suddenly down from either side upon the little hamlet, amongst white-thatched cottages and gaily-painted boats,

and the whole place is alive with colour, bustle, and sunshine. But it is not at a time like this that I wish you to think of Cadgwith. Picture to yourself this same cove at the end of December. There is a slight coating of snow on the ground and on the roofs, while on the pools far across the Downs, all day, and even for the last week, the ice has borne for skating; a rare occurrence in South Cornwall. It is eight o'clock in the evening, and the moon has just risen as I come down to the cove arrayed in jersey, thick coat and trousers, and sea-boots, over all of which to draw a suit of 'oilers.' This precaution is indispensable, as it not only keeps the wearer dry, but also protects him from the wind as no cloth clothing can do. 'Where are the three Trepolpens gone?' (they are the three brothers with whom I am to fish to-night), I ask of some coast-guards loitering near the lifeboat station.

'Gone away up to the eastward, sir,' is the reply; 'been gone since four o'clock getting bait; but it is high time they were back if they mean to go out to-night.'

As the man stops speaking, a boat shoots round the point from the shadow of the cliff into the middle of the cove.

'That's the Trepolpens' boat,' I cry; 'let us go down and give them a haul up.'

We run down to the shore, and in a minute or two the boat is high and dry. They have had a very successful afternoon, having secured twenty-two cuttles, than which 'fish' none is in greater repute for night-fishing bait.

It may not be uninteresting to mention here the manner of procuring cuttles. A boat is pulled slowly through the water with a short light line trailing behind, to which is attached a piece of fish. The man in charge of the line can tell by the increased strain the moment the cuttle has taken hold of the bait; he then proceeds to haul in very gently, as the least roughness will shake off the 'fish.' As it comes alongside, he gets ready the gaff, consisting of a rod with several hooks at the end, and if possible gaffs his victim. If this is done carefully, well and good; but if by an unpractised hand, the performer will probably be deluged with a thick inky fluid, which is secreted within the cuttle, and seems to be its natural means of defence.

But I must return to my story. We remove the bait into one of the larger boats, launch her, then getting in silently, take our places each at an oar. The boat is a heavy one, but four oars send her through the water at a very fair pace, and we are soon outside the cove, steering for the Hot Point. What a splendid moon! No fear of a collision to-night, as there was last time I was out, when we were nearly run into by a pilot cutter coming down before the wind, and almost frightened overboard by a big steamer passing within fifteen yards of us. We can see the cliffs plainly, and hear the waves as they lap against their stony face. There is Polbarra, a lovely little bay, where every day in

the season the seine-boats lie at anchor waiting for the pilchard to come by; and there is Church Cove, with the pinnacles on the tower of Landewednack Church just shewing above the hill. And now we spin along, for we have got into the race of the tide; and in a few minutes we are round the Hot, past Penolva, and half-way across Househole Bay. Not a mile off on our starboard bow are the great twin lighthouses known as the Lizard Lights, warning ships off the terrible Stag rocks, over which they keep constant watch and ward. Many are the stories which the fishermen tell of the wrecks that have occurred on these rocks in spite of the lights. I myself have seen several, one ship taking barely half an hour to go to pieces.

We have, however, now reached our fishing-ground, or rather water; the anchor (a heavy stone with a line attached, and termed the 'killick') is let go, and we commence our night's work, it being almost ten o'clock. We are situated close to the easternmost branch of the Stags, and about a mile from the shore. The first thing to be done is to get the lines out, bend on suitable hooks (which are themselves fastened on to strong cord and bound round with fine wire, to prevent the conger biting through them), and choose leads, which, as the tide is not now running very fast, need not be heavy. One-pound leads are fixed on to the lines in the stern, and two-pounders on to those in the bow; and the cuttle are cut into pieces, after having been well beaten, to make them soft and palatable to the cod, who are very dainty feeders. Before throwing the line over the side, do not forget—excuse me, gentle reader—to spit on the bait, for, in the estimation of a Cornish fisherman, you might as well have no line over at all as throw over a bait not so prepared. You must not drop a crab-pot or put out a bait of any sort without first spitting on it, 'for luck.' Now we sit on the look-out for a bite. My companions are old hands at the work, and are as calm while hauling up a fifty-pound conger as most people would be over a two-ounce trout. But I confess that I get very excited when I feel the downward drag, threatening almost to pull you out of the boat, and signifying conger; or the sharper tug which tells of cod or pollack. No. 1 in the bows has a bite; you can see that by the way in which he rises from his seat and takes a couple of turns of the line round his hand, to be in readiness when the time comes to strike. Suddenly he gives a long quick haul, and then begins pulling in rapidly.

'Be smart there with the gaff; it may be a big conger.'

But no; it is a twelve-pound cod; a nice little fellow for a dinner-table, but nothing astonishing. Ah! I have a bite now, and it feels like a conger from the way in which it surges downwards.

'Let him have it,' says one of the men; so I wait patiently for a few seconds, and then, with a mighty haul, I strike my fish and begin to pull him in. Often I have to stop from sheer inability to pull harder than my antagonist, and once or twice a yard or two of the line slips through my wet fingers; but at last he comes to the top, a splendid conger, some six feet long, and weighing thirty pounds, if an ounce. Look at his jaws and his teeth! I should be sorry for any poor fellow who got his hand in there. How he lashes the water with

his tail; but now the gaff is through his neck, and he is hove gurgling and grunting into the boat. The hook is extracted by means of a slit made in his throat with a knife, for no fisherman, however dead the conger may appear, will trust his hand in the brute's mouth.

Now that we have made a good start, the cod and pollack come up very fast. It is getting bitterly cold, for the morning is coming on, and I cannot help thinking if one could catch cod and conger in the summer-time, how delightful it would be. After a look at my flask, and a fresh pipe, I proceed to haul in my line again, at the end of which I feel a fish struggling. It is a fine ling, weighing, as near as we can judge, about twenty-five pounds; what they call down here, a 'nice handy fish!'

We remained in this place till nearly two in the morning, when, as the fish began to bite less freely, we 'up killick' and pulled farther out. Here our good luck returned, and we caught more than a dozen large fish, chiefly cod. It was now six o'clock, the moon but just above the western horizon, and a gray light was beginning to appear in the east. Why disguise the truth that night-fishing is not unalloyed pleasure, and that it was piercingly cold? My feet, ears, and nose, I knew nothing about; but the rest of my body felt the cutting wind, which had sprung up in the night, most acutely. Added to this, I had been up all night, and now that the excitement was nearly over, was almost asleep. My hands were pickled with the salt water, and to touch anything with them was agony. The fishermen's hands become, I suppose, hardened to the salt water, but to me it has always been a source of great discomfort for several days after a night of this work. Half-past six. We shall get no more fish now; so we haul up the lines and the killick, get out oars, and begin our pull home.

Cadgwith looks very gray and dull in the morning. There have been several boats besides ours out to-night, and two of them have returned, and are throwing out their fish on to the beach as we row into the cove; the wives and elder children of the fishermen are down on the shingle helping. We pull our boat ashore, jump out, and commence emptying her of the fish. There are fifteen cod, eleven pollack, five conger, and two ling; in all, thirty-three fish—a very good catch. We haul up the boat; and with a twelve-pound cod—which the Trepolpens have kindly presented to me—in my hand, I make the best of my way home, to get a couple of hours' sleep before turning out to the business of the day, which, considering the frost there had been in the night, can be only skating.

So ended my night's fishing, of which I have attempted to give you, my readers, a rough description. I have tried my hand at a good many different sorts of fishing; from catching minnows with a pin and a bit of thread in a stream I could jump across, to catching bonita and even sharks with a sail hook and small rope in the South Atlantic; but of all the variations of the gentle (?) craft, I still—its discomforts notwithstanding—prefer night-fishing off the coast of Cornwall! As for the place itself, which I have feebly attempted to portray, let me advise any one who has not been there already, to proceed to the Lizard, and spend a week or two

there: the traveller will be fully repaid for a rather tedious journey, by the beauty of the cliff scenery, and the unqualified excellence of the boating, fishing, and bathing.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE *Transactions* of the Scientific and Mechanical Society of Manchester contain an instructive account of the mischief occasioned by locusts in Missouri in 1875. Not only were growing crops of grass, grain, and vegetables devoured, but fruit-trees were stripped of leaves, twigs, and fruit, and from many young trees the whole of the bark was gnawed, and the whole country looked 'dry and verdureless as a well-beaten road.' The insects took their departure on June 20, and it seemed as if nature made haste to repair the havoc, for large breadths of grass sprang up and yielded good pasture, but produced no seed. In place of numerous weeds which had been eaten away, purslane (*Portulacca oleracea*) grew abundantly, 'occupying entire fields, and even yards, and roadsides, and waste ground, where it had not been seen before. *Phytolacca decandra* (poke-weed) was also very abundant; and what seemed curious was, that most plants appeared gregarious, only a single species, but in great numbers, occupying a certain space.' The common nettle, too, grew up everywhere and on every kind of soil; and the sand-burr, *Solanum rostratum*, intruded nearly to the same extent. This last-mentioned plant was unknown in Missouri a few years ago; now it has penetrated seventy-five miles into the state. These facts appear to be deserving of the attention of naturalists.

A Society for the promotion of agriculture in the state of Massachusetts, desiring to encourage tree-planting and the re-foresting of poor or agriculturally worthless lands in that state, have offered prizes for the best plantations of larch, pine, ash, and other trees suited to different localities and soils. The prizes range in amount from four hundred to one thousand dollars; and to facilitate the carrying out of the project, special instructions have been published for the guidance of competitors. And we are informed that 'a citizen of Boston patriotically offers to look after the importation of the seedling trees, which in such quantities and for next year's planting would have to be obtained mostly in Europe—at least the pines and larches.' This will be an interesting experiment, inasmuch as it combines embellishment and economy. If Massachusetts can be beautified with profit, so much the better for all concerned.

Grape-vines in America are infested by a mildew, the commonest form of which, in New England, is the *Perenospora viticola*. It attacks every leaf; but strange to tell, the vines do not suffer. We are informed that the mildew does not touch the grapes; that its effect on the leaves causes them to wither by the beginning of September, and that the sunshine has then room to penetrate and ripen the fruit. This ripening, it is asserted, could not take place if the leaves retained their

original luxuriance; and as the vines live on year after year apparently without injury, we may assume that the mildew is not harmful but beneficial.

As is now generally known, the Eucalyptus, or gum-tree of Australia, is said to prevent fevers and other noxious influences in the districts where it is planted. A chemist has obtained from the leaves a heavy, fragrant, resinous oil, and he finds that the main constituent of this oil is a homologue of camphor.

Professor Thiselton Dyer, of the Royal Gardens, Kew, has examined the plant which produces Latakia tobacco, and finds it to be a different species from that which produces the Turkish tobacco. The Latakia tobacco, as imported into this country, consists of the flowering twigs of the plant tied tightly in bundles. The dark colour and aromatic flavour of these bundles arise from their having been hung up for some months in the smoke of a species of pine-wood which grows in Syria, and is burnt by the tobacco-growers for the purpose of fumigation.

As elementary education continues to be a subject of discussion, we mention that some months ago suggestion was made that the telegraphic alphabet should be one of the subjects taught in elementary schools. The alphabet here in view is the Morse alphabet, a series of dots and dashes, so simple that even children may learn it. Moreover, it is known wherever telegraph wires extend, and in case of necessity can be used independently of electricity. Morse signals may be sent to a distance by the movements of the hands, or of a pole during the day, and by lights at night. Mr J. A. Russell, who brought this subject before the Royal Scottish Society of Arts, remarked that 'the necessity for a universal acquaintance with some such simple plan on the part of all seamen is only too frequently shewn around our coast. To recur to one instance: it may be remembered that when the *Northfleet* was run down, some other ships refrained from sending assistance, being misled into supposing there could be nothing amiss because they saw the lights of the *Northfleet* burning steadily; and so, many persons perished for lack of the little knowledge required to make those very lights call for help.' That the question is worth consideration is obvious, and though it was mooted last year, we may without impropriety call attention to it in the present year.

Everybody knows that the noisiness of the world has been enormously increased by railways. It is impossible to travel now without fuss and uproar. Much of the noise is inevitable; but much is avoidable: slamming of carriage-doors, for example. The noise of slamming irritates the nerves and injures the health of passengers, and is a reproach to railway management. Surely it would be possible to contrive a self-acting latch that would allow doors to be shut without a slam, and surely railway managers might be persuaded to adopt them. We hear that a 'self-acting safety-lock' was described to the Scottish Society above mentioned by Mr J. Maxwell of Dundee.

From experiments made by the Great Northern Railway Company of France and by a manufacturing firm at Mülhausen, the electric light seems likely to be available for practical uses; and what is more, we are told that the cost will not be more

than half the cost of oil or gas. The enormous hall comprising the luggage department of the railway was lighted by a single electric lamp, which burned steadily the whole evening. The source of the light was a Gramme machine of three-horse power; and if, as is stated, the Company intend to light up the whole of their station in the same way, it may be a conclusive experiment as regards economy of artificial light. The test experiments were made by Mr Tresca, a well-known man of science, and may therefore be regarded with confidence.

The extension of telegraphs in Australia has been so active, that nearly the whole sea-coast of that great country is now furnished with wires, and the several observatories get every day reports and signals from all the observing stations, and thus are made acquainted with the general state of the weather over thousands of miles. The overland line from Adelaide to Port Darwin is especially serviceable in determining the southerly march of the north-west monsoon, which at times makes its influence felt in heavy thunder-storms across the entire country. When news of rain can be sent by telegraph, owners of sheep and cattle will not have so much reason as formerly to dread the droughts. They will drive the animals to the nearest district where rain is falling.

A paper by Mr Barrett, read at a recent meeting of the Odontological Society, advocates the use of carbolic acid in the treatment of decayed teeth. The cavity having been properly cleared out, is plugged with cotton-wool which has been soaked in carbolic acid, and the usual metal filling is then put in, whereby the antiseptic properties of the acid are retained perhaps for years. The same remedy may also be applied to cases in which the fangs of the teeth are inflamed; and among dentists it is acknowledged that in carbolic acid they have a powerful and efficacious means for relieving the distressing pain occasioned by diseases of the teeth.

Mr Lawrence Smith, of Louisville, Kentucky, a well-known experimentalist, has made analyses with a view to determine the true composition of the black substance found in meteorites in a form resembling graphite, the existence of which he regards as 'a grand chemical and physical puzzle.' He has not reached the solution; but he says: 'So far as our present knowledge goes, we know of celestial carbon in three conditions—namely, in the gaseous form as detected by the spectroscope, in the attenuated matter of comets; in meteorites in the solid form, impalpable in its nature and diffused in small quantities through pulverulent masses of mineral matter that come to the earth from celestial regions; also in the solid form, but compact and hard, resembling terrestrial graphite, imbedded in metallic matter that comes from regions in space.'

The Franklin Institute of Philadelphia appointed a committee to consider the question of 'petitioning congress to fix a date after which the metric weights and measures shall be the only legal standards' throughout the United States. There are many advocates of the French system in all civilised countries; but the committee, in their Report, have decided against it, for reasons derived from history and from daily practice. 'The mètre,' they say, 'is really as arbitrary a standard as the foot. About eighty degrees of latitude have been measured, but no two of them have been found of

the same length, and there is good reason to believe that the length is not permanent in the same place. The only real thing about it is the rod in the public archives. The length of the mètre, if lost, is to be recovered by comparison with the length of the seconds pendulum, and so likewise is the length of the foot or yard.' They say further that the 'mètre in any shape is a less convenient instrument for measurement than a two-foot rule'—that 'by changing their unit of lineal measure for the sake of uniformity with France, they should sever their uniformity with Great Britain, a country with which three-fifths of their foreign commerce is transacted'—that the cost of a change would be enormous, and that 'the great mass of English technical literature would become almost useless, and must be translated from a language which we (that is, the Americans) and the nation we have most to do with understand perfectly, into a new tongue which is strange to most of our people.' Some readers will perhaps remember that the late Sir John Herschel and others of our leading men of science declared against the adoption of the mètre, and shewed that the foot or yard was in all respects a more convenient measure.

At a meeting of the Society of Natural Sciences, Neuchâtel, Switzerland, mention was made of Dr Tyndall's experiments on the transmission of sound, on which a member remarked that it had long been known that sounds are better transmitted in cloudy than in clear weather. During autumnal fogs the noise of the town is heard on the adjacent hills at elevations where the same noise cannot be heard in the summer. And as an example of another kind it was mentioned that two persons talking through a bonfire could scarcely hear each other, owing to the deviations produced in the sonorous waves by the heated column of air.

Geologists have been considering certain evidences which seem to prove that about five hundred years ago large tracts of land around the coast of Jersey became submerged. Remains of forests can still be seen at low-water; and an ancient littoral parish is now represented by a reef of rocks. There is a tradition that in the fifth century Jersey was separated from the mainland by a narrow strait only, crossed by a bridge. As regards the disappearance of land, it is known that during the earthquake in New Zealand in 1865, rising and sinking of tracts of land took place within twenty-four hours. The Director of the Geological Survey of New Zealand shewed that forests might be submerged by encroachments of the sea as well as by sinking of the land. The town of Graymouth, he said, was built on a spit of land at the mouth of a river, this spit being chiefly composed of drift-timber. After a while the inhabitants began to dig out the timber for fuel, which weakened the spit: the sea broke in, and the town was washed away.

A small book published by authority of the New Zealand government—*Reports on the Durability of New Zealand Timber*, gives a description of the various kinds of trees that grow throughout the colony, with particulars of their quality. The kauri ranks as the best; the totara stands next, followed by the rimu and other kinds of pines, the tanekaha, the cedar, birch, and the rata, or ironbark. And this information is supplemented by an account of experiments on the several kinds of timber.

ON A SPRIG OF HEATHER.

MRS GRANT, the author of the following verses, was born in 1754. Besides verse, she wrote several able and interesting prose works, her *Letters from the Mountains*, and *Essays on the Superstitions of the Highlanders*, displaying a lively and observant fancy, with considerable powers of landscape-painting. Her writings first drew attention to the more striking and romantic features of the Scottish Highlands, afterwards so fertile a theme for the genius of Scott.

Flower of the waste ! the heath-fowl shuns
For thee the brake and tangled wood—
To thy protecting shade she runs ;
Thy tender buds supply her food ;
Her young forsake her downy plumes,
To rest upon thy opening blooms.

Flower of the desert though thou art !
The deer that range the mountain free,
The graceful doe, the stately hart,
Their food and shelter seek from thee ;
The bee thy earliest blossom greets,
And draws from thee her choicest sweets.

Gem of the heath ! whose modest bloom
Sheds beauty o'er the lonely moor ;
Though thou dispense no rich perfume,
Nor yet with splendid tints allure,
Both Valour's crest and Beauty's bower
Oft hast thou decked, a favourite flower.

Flower of the wild ! whose purple glow
Adorns the dusky mountain's side,
Not the gay hues of Iris' bow,
Nor garden's artful varied pride,
With all its wealth of sweets could cheer,
Like thee, the hardy mountaineer.

Flower of his heart ! thy fragrance mild
Of peace and freedom seems to breathe ;
To pluck thy blossoms in the wild,
And deck his bonnet with the wreath,
Where dwelt of old his rustic sires,
Is all his simple wish requires.

Flower of his dear-loved native land !
Alas, when distant far more dear !
When he from some cold foreign strand,
Looks homeward through the blinding tear,
How must his aching heart deplore,
That home and thee he sees no more !

TO THE READERS OF CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL.

THE conductors have to announce that *Fallen Fortunes* will be completed next month. The story entitled *Following up the Track* will also be finished.

In October, November, and December will appear, in addition to the usual miscellaneous matter, certain shorter tales or novelettes of interest; and in January 1877 will be commenced an ORIGINAL SERIAL NOVEL, to extend over some months.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.